



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Shepard Building
255 Westminster Street
Providence, Rhode Island 02903-3400

Peter McWalters
Commissioner

May 2009

TO: Eligible Applicants

FROM: Peter McWalters 
State Commissioner of Education

SUBJECT: CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration Project
2009-2010

Background and General Information

This funding notification is to announce the availability of funds for the Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration Project which will examine the impact of locally designed Pre-K programs on children in Rhode Island with the goal of building and sustaining the expansion of a diverse delivery system of state-funded Pre-K programs across the state.

The Rhode Island Department of Education is committed to ensuring that all children begin school ready to learn and are ready to have success in their schooling careers, as life-long learners, and productive citizens. Research shows that attending high quality early childhood education programs helps children develop important social and cognitive skills and knowledge that prepares them to succeed in school. There is clear evidence of long-lasting benefits for children who participate in very high quality educationally focused early childhood programs. The benefits to children can also generate substantial government savings, including reduced need for special education services, reduced need for cash assistance and other public benefits as well as reduced rates of incarceration. In fact an analysis by economist Robert Lynch, from the Economic Policy Institute, predicts that:

“A public investment in providing high-quality prekindergarten to all Rhode Island children ages 3 and 4 would start paying for itself by generating cost savings within 9 years. By the year 2050, the ratio of total benefits to total costs would be 8 to 1.”

Currently, there are substantial numbers of children in Rhode Island entering kindergarten who are not adequately prepared to succeed in school which may ultimately increase the risk that these children drop out of school or fail to achieve their full potential.

The initial anticipated funding for the Pre-K Demonstration project will fund approximately 108 four year old children in six classrooms (of 18 children each) for the 2009-2010 school year. The classes will be comprised of children from interested families in the target communities. The demonstration will include programs in a variety of settings in recognition of the existence of early childhood expertise in the local community. Eligible organizations or entities able to open a classroom in one the following Rhode Island communities are invited to apply: Central Falls, Cranston, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick and Woonsocket. Preference will be given to programs located in low income neighborhoods within these communities.

Funds will be available for full-day programs during the demonstration phase. Full-day programs must provide instructional activities and services appropriate to preschoolers for a minimum of 6 hours per day and 180 days per year.

The program must enroll children who will be age 4 by September 1, 2009 and who reside in one of the eligible districts. Children will be selected using a state-run lottery system. The Rhode Island Department of Education will develop an outreach and recruitment process in partnership with the selected Pre-K sites to reach low and moderate income families in the target communities and invite them to apply for Pre-K openings. Children will be randomly selected for participation in the program.

Families who enroll their children in a Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration program may not be charged for any portion of the Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration program service. There will be no co-payments, registration fees, field trip fees or enrichment fees. Field trips and enrichment activities are expected to be built into the program. Programs must maintain an enrollment of 18 children per classroom.

The demonstration project will be evaluated using a randomized, control group design. Children from interested families will be randomly assigned to receive Pre-K or to a control group, using a state-run lottery. All Grantees must provide assurances of their willingness to comply with all monitoring and evaluation requirements.

The award of grant funds is contingent upon the inclusion of the anticipated Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration Project dollars in the FY 2010 State budget. Any actions taken by a potential applicant or any costs incurred in meeting conditions of the grant program prior to passage of the budget are incurred solely by the applicant.

Applications will be evaluated on a competitive basis. The Guidance indicates the standards and factors that will be more heavily weighted in the review process.

The Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration Program is administered by the Office of Diverse Learners, which is part of the Rhode Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (RIDE).

It is the intention of RIDE that awarded programs begin Pre-K services no later than the 14th day of September, 2009. All applicants must demonstrate their ability and intention to open by this date.

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Eligible Applicants

Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration funding will be offered to programs in a variety of settings in recognition of the existence of Rhode Island's diverse delivery system many of whom are already delivering high quality educational programs.

Eligible Applicants must be (1) a Licensed Child Care Center, (2) a Head Start Program, (3) a RIDE Approved Preschool OR (4) a program housed in a public or private PK-12 school that meets physical facility requirements of the RI Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Community-based Pre-K Demonstration classrooms must be located in a DCYF licensed facility. Submission of a valid DCYF license is required before awards are finalized.

Interested applicants must:

- Currently operate a program serving preschool age children and be able to open a demonstration classroom serving 18 additional children in one of the following eligible districts: Central Falls, Cranston, Pawtucket, Providence, Warwick and Woonsocket.
- Have, at the time of application, at least one staff that 1) holds a RIDE Early Childhood Certified Teacher (CEE or Professional Certificate) or 2) has an Early Childhood Certification application pending.
- Be able to staff each of the state-funded Pre-K classrooms with a RIDE Early Childhood Certified Teacher (CEE or Professional Certificate) and a CDA credentialed assistant teacher by the program start date.
- Have experience serving low-income children.
- Be able to open a new state-funded Pre-K classroom serving 18 additional children in the community without displacing current families. Enrollment for the demonstration project will occur after enrollment in the already existing classrooms to ensure that the new classroom supplements rather than supplants current services.
- Have adequate space and capacity to add an additional classroom that will only serve children selected to participate in the demonstration project. Partnerships between organizations with early childhood education expertise and those with available, appropriate space are encouraged.
- Be able to provide supervision, mentoring and support to the state-funded Pre-K classroom by a qualified individual.
- Be able to provide wrap-around child care to families who need it OR have a strong connection with and transportation to/from at least one child care provider for families

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that need it.

- Be implementing a curriculum in the state-funded Pre-K classrooms that aligns with RI Early Learning Standards. The Pre-K classroom must meet the Rhode Island Early Learning Standards and evidence of a curriculum framework will be required.
- Be prepared to assume the administrative responsibilities associated with participation in this program and the evaluation such as data collection, attendance monitoring, and progress monitoring using the Creative Curriculum.net system.
- Be willing to host an Open House for prospective parents between July 7 and July 25, 2009 to facilitate the outreach and recruitment process by letting prospective families visit the program. All interested families must complete and submit an application for a Pre-K Demonstration classroom opening. A state-run lottery will be used to select children for participation.
- Have an application submitted for participation in BrightStars, RI's Quality Rating and Improvement System if eligible. Programs eligible for participation in BrightStars include: Licensed Child Care Centers, Head Start programs and RIDE Approved Preschools.

Priority will be given to programs that meet the standards outlined in the latest version of the Rhode Island Standards for Approval of Preschool and Kindergarten Programs that are currently pending RI Board of Regents Approval. The detailed standards can be found on the following website under Proposed Regulations http://www.ride.ri.gov/Special_Populations/default.aspx.

Joint applications for funds may be submitted. However, in each case the lead agency chief administrative officer who will retain fiduciary and other administrative responsibilities for the grant must be designated and indicated in the application. The joint application, if funded, will require the signature on the contract of the official authorized to administer the program for each entity and agree to participation in the joint agreement.

An organization or entity may participate in more than one application as long as each application serves a different geographic area.

Grant Details

Grant Award: The Rhode Island Department of Education anticipates making individual grant awards up to \$9,300 per child or up to \$167,400 per classroom (this reflects the cost of operating a full-day (minimum of 6 hours), high quality program for 18 children for a minimum of 180 days per year). The funding for the Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration program includes resources adequate to support the full proportion of program expenses including compensation that would attract and retain highly qualified teachers required by the program.

Grant Period: The grant period will begin no sooner than August 1, 2009, and will end on June 30, 2010.

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Information Session: RIDE will host an optional information session for interested applicants. It is recommended that interested applicants begin work on their proposals as soon as possible and come to the information session with questions.

Application Deadlines

June 9, 2009 Information session from 6:00-8:00 p.m., Alger Hall, Room 110, on the campus of Rhode Island College

June 18, 2009 Applications due.

June 24, 2009 through July 3, 2009 Interview and site visits for finalists.

July 6, 2009 Projected announcement of approved grants. All grants are contingent upon the availability of funding.

July 7, 2009 through July 26, 2009 Open Houses for prospective families.

July 27, 2009 Student applications due.

July 28, 2009 Lotteries to select participants at each site.

Interviews and Site Visits: Only applicants meeting all of the program requirements may receive an interview and site visit. **Interviews and site visits will be scheduled between June 24 and July 3.**

Open House: All grantees must hold an Open House for prospective parents between July 7, 2009 and July 26, 2009.

Application Submission: Please submit your application by:

- 1) Mailing the **original and five copies** to Sheila Beliveau, Office for Diverse Learners, RI Department of Education, 255 Westminster St. Room 400, Providence, RI 02903

OR

- 2) E-mailing an electronic version of your application to Sheila.beliveau@ride.ri.gov. The application must be sent as a single PDF file. Multiple attachments will not be accepted.

Applications must be received no later than 4:00 p.m. on **June 18, 2009**.

No FAX copies will be accepted.

Contact Person: For more information on this Call for Applications, contact: Sheila Beliveau at (401) 222-8343 or Sheila.beliveau@ride.ri.gov.

Monitoring and Evaluation

RIDE must establish requirements to ensure the quality and effectiveness of the program and to measure its impact on children. All Grantees must provide assurances of their willingness to comply with monitoring and evaluation requirements.

To gather information and to assure an appropriate partnership, the anticipated requirements for the 2009-10 year include, but are not limited to:

1. Review of internal self-assessment and monitoring reports generated by the grantee to determine progress in implementing program standards.
2. Site visits by RIDE and Evaluators to the Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration program classrooms and for meetings with administrators and others.
3. Participation by grantees in required components of the evaluation.
4. Ongoing child outcome assessment using Creative Curriculum.net. Training will be provided by RIDE.
5. Provision of required information through narrative and budget reports submitted on a quarterly basis and other informational requests.
6. Attendance at the required Grantee meetings and trainings.

RIDE and Evaluators will be making periodic site visits to learn about program operation and to identify model programs and practices. Classroom observations and reviews of reporting measures will be conducted to assure adherence to the Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration program requirements.

Program Requirements

Eligible applicants have flexibility in designing the program, as long as the following requirements are met:

- Demonstration classrooms must maintain an enrollment of 18 children per class.
- Each demonstration classroom of 18 children will have one RIDE Early Childhood Certified Teacher (CEE or Professional Certificate) and one assistant teacher with a CDA or equivalent (12 college credits in Early Childhood Education).
- Demonstration classrooms must serve only children age 4. Children must be age 4 by September 1, 2009 to participate.
- Programs must have space to operate a separate Pre-K Demonstration classroom or collaborative arrangements with another organization that has available space. The new

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classroom must supplement rather than supplant current services.

- Classrooms must allow a minimum of 35 square feet per child.
- Classrooms must have access to an age appropriate playground.
- Appropriate water and toilet facilities must be easily accessible.
- Demonstration classrooms must implement a curriculum that aligns with and follows the RI Early Learning Standards. Teachers must use a variety of teaching strategies to engage children in carefully-designed, developmentally appropriate learning opportunities to foster development of language, literacy, math, and social skills.
- Demonstration classrooms must develop individual assessment profiles for each child which will form the basis of each child's educational program.
- Demonstration classrooms must conduct ongoing, authentic assessment and document it using Creative Curriculum.net. Training will be provided by RIDE.
- The program must ensure that all participating children will receive a comprehensive screening in accordance with RI's Child Outreach Screening Guidelines.
- Demonstration classrooms must operate for a minimum of 6 hours per day and 180 days per year and have the ability to provide wrap-around child care to families who need it OR have a strong connection with and transportation to/from at least one child care provider for families that need it.
- The program day will include time for snack, lunch, nap and outdoor learning/play periods. A full breakfast should be provided if needed.
- Programs will not be required to provide transportation to and from home.
- Demonstration classrooms must be able to accommodate children with disabilities.
- Programs must be able to provide supervision, mentoring and support to the state-funded Pre-K demonstration classroom by a qualified individual.
- Demonstration Project staff must participate in a minimum of 20 hours of professional development annually to be determined in collaboration with RIDE staff.
- Communication between parents and the demonstration classroom will be regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- Parents will be advised of their child's progress a minimum of three times per year and must be offered parent/teacher conferences at least two times per year.

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- Programs must develop and implement written plans for facilitating the transition of children to Kindergarten.
- Both public and community-based funded programs must pay all Pre-K demonstration program teachers with Early Childhood Teacher Certification and early childhood qualified teaching assistants a competitive salary and benefits based on their experience and performance. Additional budget planning information can be found on page 8.

Although not required, the following factors lead to more competitive applications:

- Meeting most or all of the proposed Rhode Island Standards for Approval of Preschool and Kindergarten Program as evidenced by a comprehensive self- assessment.
- Including innovative approaches that will meet the specific needs of children and families in the community.
- Establishing partnerships with community providers to enhance service delivery to children and families.
- Experience working with English Language Learners such as offering dual language programs (e.g. English-speaking children learn Spanish while Spanish speaking children learn English in a systematic and well-planned curriculum.)
- NAEYC Accreditation
- The results of recent ECERS scores and an overview of the program's plan to address any issues that were identified (Please indicate in the Quality Improvement section of the narrative the following: your ECERS score, the name of the assessor and the date of assessment).
- The results of recent CLASS scores and an overview of the program's plan to use the results to support the professional development of staff (Please indicate in the Quality Improvement section of the narrative the following: your CLASS score for emotional support, classroom organization and instructional strategies, the name of the assessor and the date of assessment).
- Evidence of positive learning outcomes for previous participants.
- Ability to provide comprehensive services to meet the needs of families.
- A written plan detailing parent engagement strategies.
- Supervision provided by an early childhood educator with a minimum of an MA.
- RIELS Level II trained classroom teacher with an up-to-date portfolio.

- RIELS Level III trained administrator with an up-to-date program portfolio.

Allowable Use of Funds

Funds from this initiative may only be used to cover the costs of a Rhode Island Pre-K demonstration classroom serving eligible children. The eligible population for RI Pre-K Demonstration classroom funds is defined as the following:

- Children who turned 4 between September 1, 2008 and September 1, 2009.
- Children who reside in one of the eligible districts.

The Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration program will not displace existing classrooms within an agency's program. It will be important to demonstrate in your application how your agency will minimize impact to other early childhood classrooms operated by your program.

Those applicants who participate in the Child Care Subsidy program may continue to do so. A provider may receive subsidy for the portion of the day that the child is **not funded by the Rhode Island Pre-K Demonstration program**. For example, if a program is offering a 6 hour pre-kindergarten program and wrap-around child care for the remainder of the day for a subsidized eligible child, the program may receive a part-time subsidized fee.

Budget Planning

The award process will consist of two stages. An application will be required from all interested bidders. Selected applicants must also participate in 2-3 hour planning session with RIDE and other entities to be determined by RIDE. During the planning session, selected applicants will work with RIDE to develop an appropriate 2009-2010 program budget for the demonstration classroom. Once the budget is finalized, RIDE will complete the contracting process with each applicant.

The budget for each classroom will be customized for each selected applicant based on the appropriate expected cost to run a demonstration classroom (within the total classroom allotment) in that setting. In general, the anticipated budget breakdown is as follows:

Category	Range
Salaries for teacher and teacher asst.	45-55%
Benefits for teacher and teacher asst.	16-18%
Instructional Supplies	2-4%
Meals and Snacks	8-10%
Facilities	3-5%
Non-Instructional expenses	1-3%
Administration	3-5%

Please note that funds may only be used to cover the costs to run the Pre-K Demonstration classroom. While this can include an appropriate allocation of shared expenses such as facilities

costs and administrative costs, programs may not use Pre-K Demonstration funds to cover costs that are not directly related to the Pre-K demonstration classroom.

Application Requirements

Each application must be submitted in the format outlined below. Please use the following as a checklist in assembling your completed application.

The application cover form must be completed and affixed with original signature. Application pages should be numbered. Do not include information other than what is requested (e.g. program fliers, portfolios, artwork). If you are submitting hard copies, please staple; do not bind or clip. Do not use such things as folders, three-ring binders, or report covers.

- ___ **1. Cover Form:** Must be signed by an official authorized to submit the application. Joint Applications must have the signature of each participating program official authorized to submit the application. Joint applications must designate a lead fiscal agent. Please be sure to indicate any early childhood accreditations that have been achieved.
- ___ **2. Application Narrative:** Follow the application narrative requirements.
- ___ **3. Financial Information:** Please attach financial statements for the past three years and your last audited or reviewed financial statement. If this is joint application, please submit statements for the lead fiscal agent only.
- ___ **4. Required Attachments:**

	Roster of Board Members or Governance Entity
	Current Organizational Chart
	Curriculum Framework
	Staff resumes and teaching certifications for the Pre-K Demonstration program Administrator
	Staff resume and teaching certifications for the Pre-K Demonstration program Lead Teacher and Teacher Assistant (or job descriptions if not yet hired)
	2008-2009 School Calendar
	Proposed 2009-2010 School Calendar for the Pre-K Demonstration Classroom

Application Narrative Requirements

Assemble your application narrative in the order in which each requirement is presented below. The application narrative may be no longer than 15 single-spaced pages in 12 point Times Roman font. Margins must be at least 1 inch on all sides.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

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- A. Describe your existing early education program. Include information on the size of your program, the ages served, ownership, history, program leadership, your philosophy & educational approach, participation in quality initiatives and the outcomes you have achieved. Attach a list of your board of directors or governance entity, your 2008-2009 school calendar and an organizational chart.
- B. Briefly describe (200 words or less) your planned program, including the anticipated location and outcomes.
- C. Provide evidence that your program has the space to operate a new, separate Pre-K Demonstration classroom or has arrangements for space with another organization. .
- D. How would your program be configured in order to accommodate a new state-funded Pre-K classroom without displacing any children currently enrolled in your other classrooms?

II. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Appropriate Education Program

Please describe your planned education program. The education program description must include:

- Information about the program's curriculum and how it is used to guide teachers in developing high-quality, standards-based, developmentally appropriate learning opportunities for children. Please attach copies of any written information such as the curriculum framework*, procedures manual, etc. that will be used to guide teacher's curriculum practices. In addition, if your program intends to use any published curriculum resources, please outline these resources and describe how they will be used.

* *A guide for **Developing and Implementing a Comprehensive Preschool Curriculum Framework** can be accessed at www.ride.ri.gov/els*

- Information about the programs' system for child assessment including how this information is collected and used to 1) inform families about children's progress and 2) adjust the curriculum to address each child's strengths and needs.
- Information on how the program supports the inclusion of children with disabilities in the program.

B. Family Involvement

- Describe the activities that will ensure that communication between home and the RI Pre-K Demonstration classroom(s) will be regular, two-way, and meaningful.
- Describe family engagement opportunities that will ensure that parents play an integral role in supporting children's learning through both classroom-based and

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home activities

- Describe how the program will ensure that families are full partners in the decisions that affect children and families and how family information is used to inform curriculum planning
- Describe the program's plan for providing family activities, such as workshops, field trips and child/parent events that will be provided.

C. Community Collaboration

- Describe how services and activities will be coordinated with other programs in the same service area that provide education, welfare, and health services to young children and their families (e.g. other birth-to-age-3 programs, early childhood special education, Head Start, Even Start, Title I, child care providers).
- Describe how children will make the transition both into and out of the program, including into kindergarten.

D. Staffing

- In the table format below, provide a list and description of the titles and roles of full-time and part-time professional and nonprofessional staff to be paid by the program. Include the full-time equivalent for each position and a brief description of the background and qualifications of each staff.

Position Title	FTE	Name of Staff	List Relevant Credentials (Teacher Certification and Number of College ECE credits)
Administrator			
Lead Teacher			
Teacher Assistant			

- Please summarize the background and qualifications of the administrator and all program staff. Demonstrate that staff are knowledgeable about high-quality early childhood programs and are effective in explaining, organizing and implementing them. Please attach resumes and any appropriate teaching certificates for individuals already on staff. Include detailed job descriptions for positions that will need to be filled. Please note that evidence of certification for lead staff will be required prior to final funding approval.
- Describe the procedures to ensure that the program will offer opportunities and resources for staff to share and consult with others regularly.

E. Professional Development, Mentoring and Supervision

- Who would be the direct supervisor for the teaching staff in the Pre-K classroom? How will supervision happen?
- Describe how the staff development needs will be determined for all staff, including noncertified program staff. Include a description of your staff in-service training program.
- Describe how the program's professional development plan will address issues of language and cultural diversity within the program.

F. Quality Improvement/Program Assessment

- Describe your current practices for using program and child assessment data (e.g. ECERS, CLASS, etc.) to inform continuous program improvement, including who will review the data and on what schedule. Describe how program improvement plans will be developed and how their implementation will be periodically reviewed.
- Describe procedures to be used to show measurable outcomes for family participation.

Application Review

An interagency early childhood team convened by the Rhode Island Department of Education will review the application using these criteria:

Category	Points
Capacity/Displacement	10
Education Program	20
Staffing	20
Professional Development, Mentoring and Supervision	20
Family Involvement	10
Community Collaboration	10
Quality Improvement/Program Assessment	10